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Security Council

Sixty-third year

Provisional

5872nd meeting

Tuesday, 22 April 2008, 10.30 a.m.

New York

President:	Mr. Kumalo	(South Africa)
Members:	Belgium	Mr. Belle
	Burkina Faso	Mr. Tiendrébéogo
	China	Mr. Liu Zhenmin
	Costa Rica	Mr. Weisleder
	Croatia	Mr. Vilović
	France	Mr. De Rivière
	Indonesia	Mr. Natalegawa
	Italy	Mr. Spatafora
	Libyan Arab Jamahiriya	Mr. Ettalhi
	Panama	Mr. Suescum
	Russian Federation	Mr. Shcherbak
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Sir John Sawers
	United States of America	Mr. Khalilzad
	Viet Nam	Mr. Hoang Chi Trung

Agenda

Reports of the Secretary-General on the Sudan

Report of the Secretary-General on the deployment of the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (S/2008/196)

Report of the Secretary-General on the deployment of the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (S/2008/249)

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08-31307 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 10.35 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Reports of the Secretary-General on the Sudan

Report of the Secretary-General on the deployment of the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (S/2008/196)

Report of the Secretary-General on the deployment of the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (S/2008/249)

The President: In accordance with the understanding reached in the Council's prior consultations, I shall take it that the Security Council agrees to extend an invitation under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure to Mr. Rodolphe Adada, Joint African Union/United Nations Special Representative for Darfur.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

I invite Mr. Adada to take a seat at the Council table.

In accordance with the understanding reached in the Council's prior consultations, I shall take it that the Security Council agrees to extend an invitation under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure to Mr. John Holmes, Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

I invite Mr. Holmes to take a seat at the Council table.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations.

Members of the Council have before them two reports of the Secretary-General on the deployment of the African Union United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur, contained in documents S/2008/196 and S/2008/249.

At this meeting, the Security Council will hear briefings by Mr. Rodolphe Adada, Joint African Union/United Nations Special Representative for Darfur, and Mr. John Holmes, Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator.

I now give the floor to Mr. Rodolphe Adada, Joint African Union/United Nations Special Representative for Darfur.

Mr. Adada: I have my own statement for the Security Council, but I would present, with your permission, a very short update on the political process that the two Special Envoys, Jan Eliasson and Salim Ahmed Salim, have asked me to present to the Council.

(*spoke in French*)

I would like to thank you, Mr. President, for providing me with this opportunity to brief the Council. The 90-day report of the Secretary-General offers comprehensive information on the reporting period in question. Today, I will focus on the current security, humanitarian and political situation in Darfur.

The African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID) was deployed in accordance with resolution 1769 (2007), with a mandate under Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations. The central expectation placed upon us by the people of Darfur and the international community, through the solemn decision of the Security Council, is to provide protection for the civilians of Darfur. The people of Darfur have suffered terribly from war during the past five years, and the world has demanded unequivocally that this suffering be brought to an end. The African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID) is the primary instrument chosen by the Council for that task.

As I speak today, I must report frankly that there is a long way to go before we can say that we have met those expectations and fulfilled the promise made by the Council. Our forces are serving under exceptionally difficult conditions, facing daily dangers and hardships. I am obliged to report that the obstacles they need to surmount and the risks that they run have not diminished over the past three months.

In spite of all our efforts, it remains the case that three months into UNAMID's operations, the force strength has not increased much from the strength of the African Union Mission in Sudan (AMIS) as it was at the end of December 2007. The force is at less than 40 per cent of its mandated level of 19,555 and it is

very unlikely to achieve full operating capability before 2009.

The key challenges are therefore to ensure that the former AMIS units and incoming units from troop-contributing countries are self-sustaining. Otherwise, measures must be put in place to assist them on the ground. The majority of the former AMIS bases that are being retained by UNAMID require expanding and refurbishing. Furthermore, the deteriorating conditions of roads in Darfur and the approaching rainy season will make the main supply routes impassable in many areas. All these challenges will require exceptional logistics and engineering operations which will dictate the rate of deployment of new and expanded units.

In light of all these complications, the mission is finalizing a list of vital emergency measures needed to reposition the deployment back on track. The achievement of the mission's new deployment goals and the application of these measures will once again depend heavily on the timely and unhindered cooperation of all the stakeholders.

Having said that, I am happy to inform the Council that a number of deployments by troop-contributing countries are scheduled over the next three months, including the main body of the Chinese engineering company, the Egyptian infantry battalion, the Egyptian signals, engineering and transport companies, the Bangladeshi multi-role logistics company and the Nigerian level-II hospital. The Ethiopian advance party has arrived in El Fasher, and their deployment is expected to be completed in June. All these deployments are dependent upon the arrival of the contingent-owned equipment in Darfur.

During the next three months we expect the four Nigerian battalions and the South African battalion to rotate. The combination of the planned deployments and the rotation will put UNAMID under considerable pressure. Owing to the very long line of communication from Port Sudan into Darfur, the difficult road conditions and the lack of capacity among local contractors, the risk of delays remains high.

The Force Commander's priority is to have the 10 existing infantry battalions brought up to the United Nations contingent-owned equipment and self-sustaining standards. This is a considerable challenge since, although troop-contributing countries can generate the troops, many of them are unable to meet United Nations requirements. I should like to express the mission's appreciation to the donors for their initiative to increase the operational capability of troop-contributors.

Since the transfer of authority, UNAMID is still lacking five critical operational capabilities: attack helicopters, surveillance aircraft, medium-lift support helicopters, military engineers and logistical support. An offer to meet part of the attack and medium-lift helicopter requirement has been made by Ethiopia, and an initial reconnaissance has been carried out by that country.

I am happy to confirm that UNAMID police and civilian components are gradually increasing their impact on the ground in Darfur. Patrols are being conducted for substantially longer periods over greater areas of Darfur and now take place on a daily basis. More protection is being provided to vulnerable groups during firewood collection, enhancing security around the camps for internally displaced persons (IDPs) and providing better protection, especially for the women in the IDP camps.

In addition, police advisers have held several public forums with the leadership of the IDP camps to explain the UNAMID police mandate and duties, the concept of community policing and violence against women. The introduction of the community policing concept has culminated in the registration and training of 287 IDP volunteers, 30 of whom are women.

The mission remains concerned with the security situation on the ground and the lack of systematic or sustained protection for vulnerable civilians in Darfur. In this context, the recent Government attacks on villages in the northern corridor of West Darfur left at least 100 civilians dead and caused tens of thousands to flee their homes. The attacks by the Sudanese Armed Forces were in response to an earlier attack by the Justice and Equality Movement at the beginning of the year. These acts constitute grave violations of international humanitarian law and need to be strongly condemned. All the parties involved in the conflict must respect their obligations under international humanitarian law and implement their obligations under all relevant Security Council resolutions and existing ceasefire agreements.

While security is primary concern of the mission, and the one that has the most direct impact on the lives of civilians in Darfur, UNAMID continues to push for

a comprehensive political solution to the conflict. The mission is fully committed to supporting the work of the Special Envoys and will continue to encourage all stakeholders to reach a negotiated solution.

Despite all these relentless efforts, I am afraid that the prospects for the peace process in Darfur remain very slim. The senior staff of UNAMID continues to meet with the representatives of the signatories and non-signatories to the Darfur Peace Agreement (DPA). Unfortunately, it is commonly understood today in Darfur that peace is not at all attractive, either economically or politically. Signatories of the DPA have not only lost most of their political credibility and popular backing from the grass roots in Darfur; they also have expressed their deep frustration and disappointment about the lack of financial, political and logistical support they receive from the international community and the Government of the Sudan. Non-signatories are, however, still being armed and enjoy the logistical and financial support which allows them to sustain the political backing in Darfur. All local and international actors need to exert serious efforts to reverse this dangerous trend.

Furthermore, the conflicts in Darfur and Chad are now closely linked. In the current state of affairs, it is difficult to consider a solution to one conflict without taking the other into account. UNAMID will remain in close contact with the United Nations Mission in the Central African Republic and Chad (MINURCAT) and with those African and international leaders who are engaged in seeking a solution to the problems between the Sudan and Chad.

Among the priorities of the mission, as the body mandated by resolution 1769 (2007) to contribute to the implementation of the Darfur Peace Agreement, are reviving the Joint Commission and restructuring the Ceasefire Commission so that it can have a meaningful mechanism for monitoring and verifying violations of the ceasefire agreement. In the absence of a widely supported peace agreement, the Ceasefire Commission is a crucial tool for the implementation of the mission's mandate.

The challenges facing UNAMID are formidable in every respect. There are such high hopes in the mission that the warm reception that Darfurians have given it could very quickly degenerate into deep frustration. It is disturbing to note that, although Darfur is at the top of the international agenda, this attention has not thus far been translated into action to provide UNAMID with the means to accomplish its mission.

In resolution 1769 (2007), the Council gave the mission an extraordinary mandate, corresponding to the international community's level of concern at the unacceptable human suffering in Darfur. Carrying out that mandate on the ground requires tools that are equal to the task. It would be a tragedy if the high hopes for that mandate — particularly the responsibility to protect millions of innocent civilians who continue to live in fear — were to be dashed.

The Council has consistently stated that it considers Darfur to be among the most important crises today, and Council members have committed themselves to ensuring that a force capable of addressing the complexities of the conflict is deployed in an effective and timely manner. Therefore, I appeal to the Council to redouble its efforts to assist the mission in overcoming the logistical and political obstacles that it currently faces.

I would like to conclude by expressing my gratitude for the good cooperation between the United Nations and the African Union in bringing about the progress made thus far by UNAMID. And, on behalf of all my colleagues, I thank the Council for having given me this opportunity to speak about the work of UNAMID.

(*spoke in English*)

With the Council's permission, I shall now read out the following brief statement by the Special Envoys, which provides an update on the political process.

> "As members of the Council are aware, it will be very difficult for UNAMID to implement its mandate and protect the civilians of Darfur if there is no peace to keep. According to Special Envoys Eliasson and Salim, prospects for comprehensive substantive talks in the near future are dim. Their emphasis is now on reducing the level of violence and preparing a cessation of hostilities.
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> "The five movement groupings have made little progress in unifying their positions and agreeing on a negotiation team. The Government of National Unity lacks a coherent Darfur strategy. The security situation has deteriorated dramatically. Relations between Chad and Sudan

have been strained, and humanitarian access has been threatened.

"In view of the dire security situation, the Special Envoys have re-emphasized the primacy of a political solution and have refocused the work of the mediation on establishing a dialogue between the parties on security-related matters. On 17 and 18 March in Geneva, they held consultations with regional and international partners to discuss the way forward. There was agreement among all participants that improving the security situation in Darfur, as well as normalizing the relationship between Sudan and Chad, was essential in order to make progress on the political track.

"Since the Geneva meeting, the Joint Mediation Support Team has shuttled between the movements and the Government to determine the conditions under which the parties could engage in a dialogue on security issues, including the framework for a cessation of hostilities. To highlight the urgency of the matter, the Special Envoys were in Khartoum, Juba and Darfur over the past two weeks, exploring with the parties the possibility of convening such consultations. The Government of Sudan has set up a technical team to work with the mediation. The Envoys have stressed the importance of involving both Minni Minawi and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement in these discussions.

"In meetings with the representatives of the United Resistance Front, Abdul Wahid and Khalil Ibrahim, the movements agreed with the Envoys that improving the security situation is the first priority. Concrete steps are now being taken to move forward as soon as possible on establishing a dialogue between the parties under African Union and United Nations auspices. The Joint Mediation Support Team is also continuing its work to find common ground among Sudanese civil society, political parties, traditional leaders and the internally displaced population on the various issues related to peace in Darfur, including the census and the elections."

The President: I thank Mr. Adada for his own statement and also for reading out the statement by the facilitators of the political process.

I now give the floor to Mr. John Holmes, Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator.

Mr. Holmes: Thank you, Mr. President, for the opportunity to provide the Council with an update on the humanitarian situation to complement what members just heard from the Joint Special Representative.

The Council first discussed Darfur four years ago this month. Sadly, many of the observations that my predecessor made at that time remain only too relevant today: growing numbers of displaced, continuing hostilities and violence against civilians, increasing humanitarian needs and limited access to beneficiaries. The difference is that almost six times as many people are now affected. Jan Egeland spoke in April 2004 of approximately 750,000 people in danger. Of Darfur's estimated 6 million people, some 4.27 million have now been seriously affected by the conflict; 2.45 million are internally displaced, while an additional 260,000 have sought refuge in neighbouring countries.

One year ago, I briefed the Council myself for the first time, following my first visit to Darfur as Emergency Relief Coordinator. I am sad to say that the humanitarian situation is as grim today as it was then, if not more so. In 2008 so far, a further 100,000 civilians have been forced to flee, many of them not for the first time. Nearly 60,000 were displaced in West Darfur alone. The Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) rebel movement was responsible for initiating the latest round of violence there by attacking Government installations, including reportedly launching attacks from within civilian areas, with the civilian population bearing the brunt of the consequences. But military units of the Government of Sudan once again used disproportionate force and failed to differentiate between military and civilian targets in their response, including aerial bombardments. Last month's report by the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights highlighted targeted attacks on civilians during that campaign, in particular through the use of Janjaweed militias to terrorize the population before the arrival of regular forces.

Elsewhere in Darfur, too, hostilities between the parties, intra-rebel and tribal clashes, aerial bombardments and the resurgence of Janjaweed

militias have resulted in death, displacement and widespread violations of international human rights and humanitarian law. Cross-border attacks and support for each other's rebel groups by Chad and the Sudan have further destabilized security in both countries, despite efforts to reduce tensions following the Dakar Agreement.

Darfur today is therefore still characterized by insecurity, lawlessness and impunity. The effects on civilians are not difficult to imagine. Widespread human rights abuses continue to be reported in many areas. A particularly worrying feature is evidence of high levels of sexual violence and exploitation in the northern corridor of West Darfur over the past two months — for example, judged by the dramatically increased number of women and girls seeking treatment for the effects of those brutal acts and statistics for sexually transmitted infections treated at local health clinics.

In my previous trips to Darfur, I met women who had the courage to tell me some of their stories, while the authorities have continued to deny that any such thing could exist in their country. Sexual violence in Darfur is not a figment of our collective imaginations. I call upon the Government, which has the primary responsibility for the protection of its citizens, to take concrete steps to address this scourge, and on the armed groups to help stamp it out.

The humanitarian community itself is also subject to constant violence. Since the start of the year we have seen 106 vehicles hijacked — 46 United Nations and non-governmental organization vehicles and 60 trucks contracted to the World Food Programme (WFP). One WFP-contracted driver has been killed and 26 drivers are still missing. The rate of hijackings is more than 350 per cent higher than even the already alarming statistics of 2007.

So far in 2008, 42 humanitarian premises have been assaulted, and six aid workers killed. Rebel groups and individuals associated with them appear to be primarily responsible for the attacks on convoys and hijackings, whether their motives are military or criminal. All that is seriously jeopardizing efforts to deliver aid, and in particular to preposition relief supplies ahead of the rainy season. It also comes at a time when several key humanitarian indicators are getting worse, including those on malnutrition, which is now in excess of emergency threshold levels in many areas of Darfur.

That may sound a sadly familiar story, if no less unacceptable for that. But we need also to be aware of the cumulative effects of continued violence, stress and upheaval in Darfur. Those in the camps feel helpless and voiceless. The fear of never being able to return to their areas of origin and the pressure by Government authorities to return when conditions are clearly not right lead to increasing tension, polarization, politicization and even militarization.

But the conflict and the continuing degradation of traditional social structures after five years of fighting and flight have serious consequences not just for the stability of camps for internally displaced persons (IDPs), but more fundamentally for the long-term stability of Darfur itself. How many will be able, or indeed even willing, to return to their previous lives when peace finally arrives? Normality cannot simply be suspended for five years or more and then resume as if nothing had happened. That problem is aggravated every month that passes without peace.

Meanwhile even relatively untouched rural communities are increasingly vulnerable and require our assistance in growing numbers. In some areas, for example, the price of staple commodities such as millet has doubled since this time last year. That partly reflects the global phenomenon of rising food prices and partly unfavourable weather, but it is also a result of general dislocation and neglect as so many fields go untilled and infestations of disease and pests go unchecked. Unfortunately, we cannot always access those rural communities. It is inevitable that some of their inhabitants too will end by migrating to IDP camps — many of which are currently well beyond capacity — in search of assistance. We are already seeing this in Al Salaam camp in south Darfur, where approximately 1,000 newly arrived families remain unregistered, with 17 deaths among that group during the month of March alone.

There is a risk that developments will take an even more serious turn. The World Food Programme announced last week that it would be forced to reduce its food distributions next month. Regular attacks on its convoys, in particular on the roads from Kordofan to El Fasher in north Darfur and Ed Daein in south Darfur, mean that they have simply not been able to preposition food stocks as necessary and cannot now

catch up without a radical transformation of the position. That means that the amount of food provided to the conflict-affected men, women and children in Darfur will be halved in a matter of days. That heart-breaking decision could not come at a worse time, as the agency continues to struggle in any case to deliver to its existing beneficiaries as the rainy season approaches.

During that period malaria, water-borne diseases, respiratory infections and other illnesses normally cause mortality to increase in Darfur. The effects on those further weakened by poor nutrition are likely to be much worse. Global acute malnutrition in children under the age of five, for example, which is already in excess of emergency thresholds in many areas of Darfur, could double. It is therefore vital that the Government of the Sudan does much more to protect those convoys and that the armed groups stop such attacks by anyone associated with them, as well as halting all attempts to extract so-called taxes at checkpoints along the roads.

The African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur is also looking at how it can help. Meanwhile, I appeal to the donor community to redouble its efforts to ensure that key under-funded sectors such as health, nutrition and water and sanitation receive the rapid support they need.

I am pleased to say that the moratorium on restrictions and the joint communiqué on the facilitation of humanitarian assistance in Darfur, which were extended at the end of January, have helped to alleviate bureaucratic obstacles. I am grateful to the Government of the Sudan for improved cooperation in that area, but the humanitarian operation still faces other obstacles. Those agreements do not, for example, ensure physical access to IDPs and other vulnerable groups. Humanitarian workers are too often blocked by military intelligence, national security elements or civilian police, seemingly at random. Those denials of access serve no discernible purpose aside from frustrating relief efforts and increasing suffering.

The Government of the Sudan can therefore do much more to help on the humanitarian side. In areas under its control, the Government should improve security for civilians and the international community, in accordance with international law, and ensure more freedom of movement for relief organizations. The Government should disband once and for all the Janjaweed militias and put an end to impunity for those who commit crimes — including banditry, the killings of civilians and rape — by actively seeking out those responsible and prosecuting them. As an increasingly prosperous country, the Sudan should provide more assistance to its population, rather than continuing to allow the international community to shoulder virtually all the financial responsibility.

Rebel movements are responsible for many of the threats facing civilians and the relief operation. They too can do much more. They should stop endangering the lives of civilians by the kind of attacks that are bound to provoke a response in civilian areas, with predominantly civilian casualties. All groups should stop attacking humanitarian vehicle convoys and premises, control all those within their ranks and punish those responsible. The movements should ensure safe humanitarian access and assistance and show respect for basic humanitarian principles. They should ensure the civilian character of IDP camps and villages.

In spite of those challenges, 14,700 international, national and local relief workers continue, wherever and whenever possible, to provide life-saving assistance. I spoke a year ago of the fragility of the operation. That has increased as time has gone by. But the agencies, organizations and individuals involved have refused to be intimidated. I salute their determination and that of donors.

However, even if the humanitarian presence at times can act as a deterrent to violence against civilians and our efforts sustain the lives of millions, humanitarians still cannot provide what is fundamentally lacking.

I am saddened and angry as Emergency Relief Coordinator that, after five years of that suffering and four years since the Council became actively engaged, we have still not been able to find a lasting solution to the suffering of those millions of men, women and children. A study in 2006 suggested that 200,000 had lost their lives from the combined effects of the conflict. That figure must be much higher now, perhaps half as much again, yet we continue to see the goalposts receding, to the point where peace in Darfur seems further away today than ever. Further progress in the deployment of UNAMID, equipped to protect civilians and improve security, will help, but only an end to all violence and concrete steps towards a

political settlement will make the fundamental difference needed, as the rebel movements themselves above all need to recognize. Otherwise, the reality is that the people of Darfur face a continued steady deterioration of their conditions of life and their chances of lasting recovery.

I said at this time last year that I hoped from the bottom of my heart that I would not be back here one year later to repeat the same messages, but the reality is that I have come here today to give the Council even worse news. In the absence of any real progress towards a solution, whatever the efforts of the international community and the Council, profound human suffering will continue to grow in Darfur.

The President: I thank Mr. Holmes for his briefing.

In accordance with the understanding reached in the Council's prior consultations, I now invite Council members to informal consultations to continue our discussion on the subject.

The meeting rose at 11.15 a.m.